

M: 35-53

1896; pre-1941

Chevy Chase Village Hall and Library
5906 Connecticut Avenue (MD 185)
Chevy Chase

The Village Hall is located at the center of the Chevy Chase Village Survey District (M: 35-13), facing the west side of Connecticut Avenue. The main block of this horizontal, linear building is a simple hipped roof structure flanked by secondary hipped roof wings to the north and south. The dominant architectural style is Craftsman, exhibited in exposed rafter tails, stucco wall finish, and paired geometric-patterned windows. Colonial Revival influence is found on the main block in a keystone arch and corner quoins, and on secondary blocks with classical door openings flanked by simple pilasters. The main block and southern wing originally housed the Village library, while the north wing, which extended to the west (rear), accommodated the post office and fire apparatus. By 1941, the post office was expanded in an addition to the north.

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY M: 35-53

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Chevy Chase Library

AND/OR COMMON

Chevy Chase Village Hall

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

5906 Connecticut Avenue,

CITY, TOWN

Chevy Chase

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8th

STATE

Maryland

VICINITY OF

COUNTY

Montgomery

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT
☒ BUILDING(S)
☐ STRUCTURE
☐ SITE
☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC
☒ PRIVATE
☐ BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION
☐ IN PROCESS
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED
☐ UNOCCUPIED
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS
ACCESSIBLE
☒ YES: RESTRICTED
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED
☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS
☒ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION
☐ MILITARY ☐ OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Chevy Chase Village Government

Telephone #: 654-7300

STREET & NUMBER

5906 Connecticut Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Chevy Chase

VICINITY OF

MD

20815

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Chevy Chase Village Hall

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET & NUMBER

see above

CITY, TOWN

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

M:35-53

CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

somewhat

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED

DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Originally, Chevy Chase Library (approximately 1900) (now Chevy Chase Village Hall) was as a small, unpretentious, rustic cottage designed to house a library. It was a one-story, roughly square structure built of wood and covered with stucco. Its interior was covered with plaster and later cherry wood panel.

Today, the building that once housed the library is the center focus of Chevy Chase Village Hall. The character of the library's interior (although not a library today) has been retained. The building has expanded on both sides of the original structure. The space that once held the library is 1500 square feet; the entire building is 5,500 square feet.

NOTE: Plans and elevations of this building belong to the Chevy Chase Village City Government. Unfortunately, the plans and elevations are being photographed in Annapolis and are not available to me.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES roughly 1900

BUILDER/ARCHITECT please see text

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Chevy Chase Library is one of Montgomery County's most important architectural monuments. As the area's first library, it well represents the ideals of turn-of-the-century America and their impact upon the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area and its developing Maryland suburb of Chevy Chase. In particular, it is the result of educational reform, the library movement and the suburban movement.

Beyond this, Chevy Chase Library is historically significant because of what it became in the life of its community. Although designed as an intimate library in a small residential village located in the countryside of Maryland, it evolved into the center of civic life in Chevy Chase. Today, it is called Chevy Chase Village Hall because it is the community's town hall, its seat of local government.

As a "village hall," this unpretentious cottage is a symbol of Chevy Chase. Yet, its historic importance reaches far beyond the confines of its own village. It represents the qualities and associations which attracted so many urban dwellers to rural Montgomery County in the first place. It is an architectural expression that embodies the spirit of those who sought refuge from the city in the beauty of nature and in the country life style of Montgomery County.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The suburban movement, a nation-wide phenomena, had its roots in 19th century Romanticism. The Romantic Movement fostered a respect for nature --- for its beauty and its ability to improve man's health and mind. In 19th century America, a reverence for nature shaped the profession of landscape architecture and gave rise to both the park and suburban movements.

During this period, the virtues of nature coupled with the desire to escape the congestion and pollution of the city made living in the "country" appealing. The ability to commute great distances by railroad and electric trolley made possible working in the city and living in the suburbs. The suburban movement and the ideals of Frederick Law Olmsted, the leading American landscape architect and the force behind the park movement, had a particularly powerful effect upon the Washington Metropolitan area. This, in turn, greatly affected Chevy Chase, Maryland.

Chevy Chase was founded in 1890 by Senator Francis B. Newlands (1848-1917), a lawyer who served in the United States Congress for 24 years from 1893 to 1917. During the 1880s, he became interested in the idea of buying large tracks of land in the "country," in northwest Washington stretching out five or six miles into Maryland along Connecticut Avenue extended for the purpose of a suburb. In 1890, Newlands was founder and president of the Chevy Chase Land Company, which purchased 1712 acres encompassing Chevy Chase. At this time, Chevy Chase was beautiful, unblemished countryside with a wide variety of trees and plants.

It was also rich in history, having been part of a land grant of 560 acres called "Cheivy Chace" awarded to Colonial Joseph Belt in 1751, and later owned by Philip Barton Key, the uncle of Francis Scott Key, and John W. Claggett. During the War of 1812, important state papers were hidden from the British in the farmhouse built in 1747. In 1814, the property was sold to Abraham Bradley, Assistant Post Master General of the United States. The farmhouse was renamed the Bradley House.

In Chevy Chase, Newlands organized and orchestrated the talents of others to create his ideal suburb. Well known, professional architects Leon Dessez and Lindley Johnson were commissioned to design the prototype houses, what were called "cottages." A comprehensive landscape plan, which encompassed architecture, transportation,

sanitation and the treatment of nature, was an important part of Newlands' village community. The general plan and the lay-out of roads were designed by landscape architect Nathan F. Barrett of New York, perhaps with the guidance of Barrett. Samuel M. Gray, a sanitary engineer, was hired to develop the water and sewage system, and to provide 20 artesian wells.

As the community began to take shape, a strong sense of community and civic pride arose. To make the community ideal, a library was needed. In 1896, Newlands' two younger daughters and the eldest daughter of the Birney family (who became Mrs. Harold Walker) started the Chevy Chase Library Association, a group which met once a week to plan a library and purchase books. Not surprisingly, Newlands' Chevy Chase Land Company donated land on Connecticut Avenue extended for a library.

The Chevy Chase Library was probably planned by Dessez or Johnson, the architects then in Newlands' employ. Local architect Arthur Heaton also worked on early plans for the library.² In keeping with the character of the village, Chevy Chase Library was designed as a small, one-story unpretentious cottage with a domestic flavor. It consisted of one spacious room with a central fireplace, symbolic of home, hearth and family. Within this cozy, wood-paneled library, one could sit and read for the charge of \$.10.

The library quickly became the center of civic life and a symbol of the ideals of the community. Its functions have been varied as it has met the needs of Chevy Chase residents. In effect, the library, now called Chevy Chase Village Hall, has served as the seat of local Chevy Chase government, as a town hall of sorts, where public meetings and political debates are held. In 1912, it became the voting precinct for Chevy Chase. Early on, the library was also used as a place of worship. Local Catholic and Christian Science congregations met in the library for worship before the erection of their own church edifices.

In 1914, Chevy Chase Village became an incorporated municipality with the powers and responsibilities of local government. Since then, a Board of Managers, a committee of seven, has governed the village and adopted necessary ordinances for the benefit of residents' health and welfare. On April 16, 1914, the Maryland General Assembly designated Chevy Chase as a special tax area modelled after the New England town meeting system. In 1924, Chevy Chase hired its first village manager or superintendent of public works. This event made Chevy Chase one of the first municipalities in the United States to employ a city

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

(CONTINUED)

manager form of government.

Today, the building which once housed the library is no longer a library, but one room in Chevy Chase Village Hall. The hall now houses the local post office, as well as village manager's office. The section designed as the original library is now used as a meeting room for governmental, civic and community activities. Fortunately, all additions to this building were designed to respect in style and scale of the original library. The character of the one-story cottage library determined the future of what is now Chevy Chase Village Hall.

COMMENTARY

The owners of Chevy Chase Library (Village Hall) have always shown the building a great deal of respect. It is unlikely that the building would be destroyed in the near future. However, it is important to safeguard the future of this historic monument.

MAJOR REPOSITORIES

The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.;
Records, Chevy Chase Village Hall, Chevy Chase;
Archives, Chevy Chase Historical Society;

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.;
Chevy Chase Historical Society;
Chevy Chase Village Hall;

M:35-53

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATAACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 16000 F

building: 5,500 square feet;
historic section: library: 1,500 square feet;

JXBJ 1 1981

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Connecticut Avenue, Kirke Street,

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

KARIN M.E. ALEXIS, PH.D., ART & ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

ORGANIZATION

DATE JUNE 1988

STREET & NUMBER

2449 Villanova Drive

TELEPHONE

280-1107

CITY OR TOWN

Vienna, Virginia

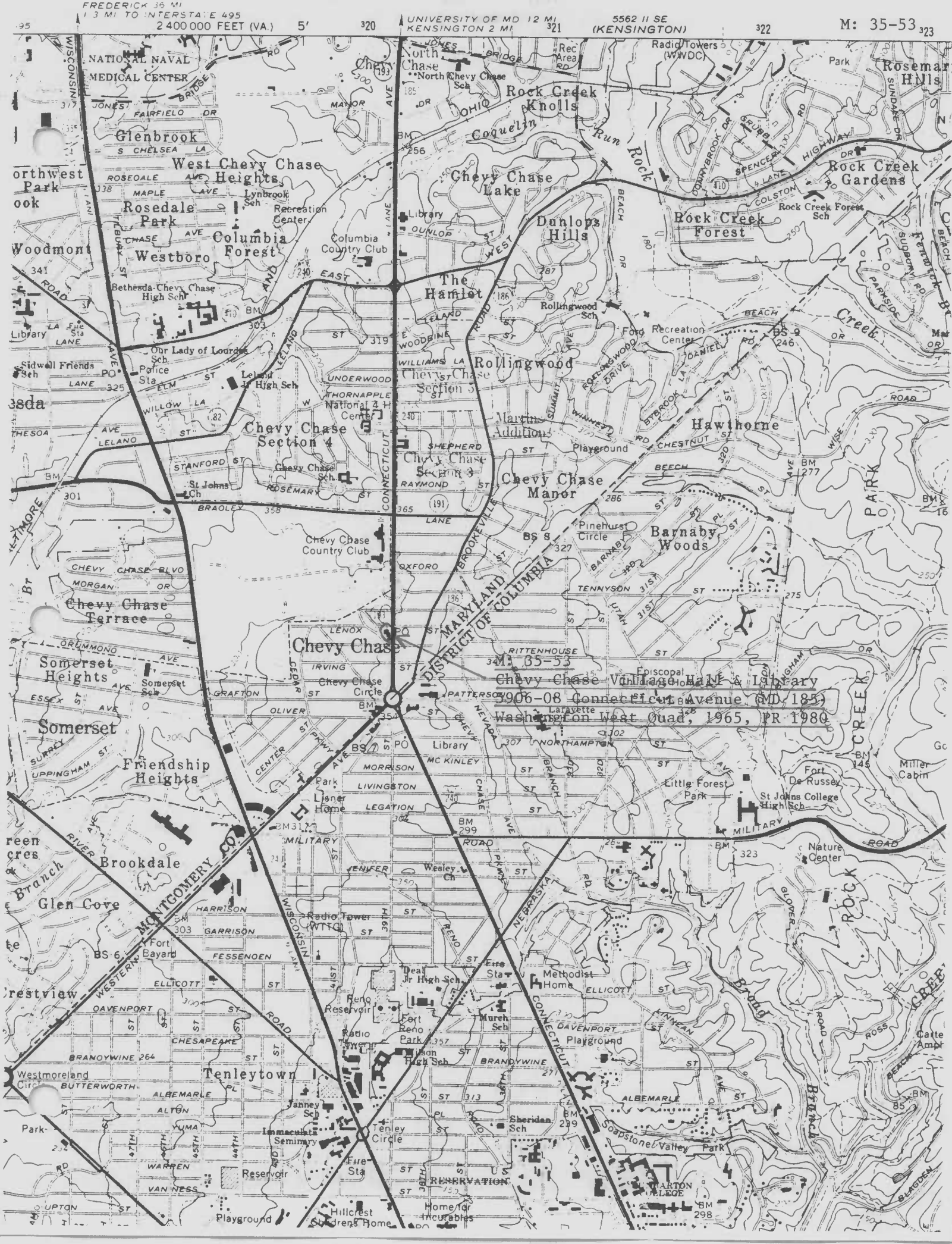
22180

STATE

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438



Chevy Chase
35-53
Chevy Chase Village Hall & Library
3906-08 Connecticut Avenue, MD 185
Washington West Quad, 1965, PR 1980



2/52

M:35/3

CHEVY CHASE VILLAGE

LIBRARY

ROBIN ZIEK

2/96

5906-08

CONNECTICUT AVENUE

M:35-53

Chevy Chase Village Hall & Library

5906-08 Connecticut Avenue (MD 185)

Chevy Chase

Robin Ziek

2/1996

(see M:35-13 for original)